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ABSTRACT

The results of surveys of early- and late-entry French immersion program graduates in Ottawa and Carleton, Ontario are reported and discussed. The majority of respondents were graduates who had transfered from early-entry immersion programs to bilingual programs in grades 7, 8, or 9, graduates of the full late-entry immersion program, and graduates who had followed high school programs emphasizing French instruction. The survey questions concerned the students' educational background, activities since leaving school, exposure to French in courses and in other situations, self-assessed French proficiency and changes in proficiency, recommendations about French instruction, attitudes about the role of universities and colleges in language instruction, and plans for the future. Results show a typical profile of a student who followed a bilingual educational path in high school, took a university program in arts or science, and had some job experience in which French was used. Most thought that French skills would be an asset in the job market and had confidence in their own language skills, despite some sense of decline in skills since leaving school. (MSE)

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EVALUATION OF THE SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING (FRENCH) PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE OTTAWA AND CARLETON BOARDS OF EDUCATION, VOLUME III

Surveys of Bilingual-Program Graduates, 1984

FRANCES MORRISON, Principal Investigator
ROSEMARY BONYUN

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The Honourable Sean Conway, Minister

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ABSTRACT

The 1984 contract with the Ministry of Education of Ontario included provision for a continuing follow-up of Ottawa and Carleton graduates of a high school program intended for students from elementary immersion programs. In preparation for later follow-up activities, information was also obtained from students at the Grade 12 and 13 levels in both boards. These groups included students from late-entry immersion, as well as the first sizeable groups of early-entry immersion students to finish school.

In the questionnaire survey of three Ottawa graduate groups which was also conducted in 1984, the response rate was about 70 per cent. Two of these groups, consisting mainly of students who had been in Grade 13 in the spring of 1980 or 1981, had also completed questionnaires in 1982. The majority of these graduates had followed a bilingual program starting in Grade 7, 8, or 9. The third graduate group, consisting of students who had been in Grade 13 in 1982-83, included a higher proportion of graduates of the full Ottawa late-entry program starting in Grade 6. Over 80 per cent of these immersion graduates were taking courses and most planned to continue their studies in 1984-85.

In Carleton 80 per cent of the students still in high school had taken 10 to 12 courses in French in Grades 9 to 12 and the same proportion of Ottawa students had taken the 13 French credits needed for the "Bilingual Certificate" offered by that board. Over half of the students had taken or planned to take some French in Grade 13 and about 90 per cent expected to continue their education in the following year.

The Grade 12 and 13 respondents had more confidence in their ability to understand written or spoken French than in their capacity to write or speak the language, but less than 10 per cent expected to have considerable difficulty in any of the four skill areas. When asked how they thought French would be important to them in the future, the largest group cited improved job opportunities. These students most often mentioned that the courses in French literature had been a particularly good aspect of the program. More of the early-entry than of the late-entry graduates believed immersion should start in Kindergarten or Grade 1.

Like the Grade 12 and 13 students, members of the 1983 graduate group rated their French listening and reading skills higher than their writing or speaking proficiency. When choosing

a post-secondary institution, these graduates rated the institution's reputation and location as more important than the French language facilities. When respondents in this group were asked about effects of the immersion or bilingual program, most made positive statements about the value of the French skills they had acquired or about other benefits of the program. The only negative effect mentioned by more than 10 per cent of the group was the restriction the program placed on course choice in high school.

About one in four of the total group of graduates surveyed had taken a French course in the previous year and about half expressed a desire to take further courses. About a third of these students had used French "scarcely at all" apart from courses taken, while over half indicated that they had used it to some degree in a work situation. Around 40 per cent of respondents felt their French proficiency had decreased because of lack of opportunity to use the language. Over half of those in the three graduate groups indicated that they expected that French would be "very important" to them in the future in opening up better job opportunities and in travelling. Over a third of respondents believed that postsecondary institutions should play a major role in helping students improve their French skills, and about the same proportion said that the role should be a modest one.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

The programs. For ten years or more both the Ottawa and the Carleton Boards of Education have offered intensive programs in French in selected high schools. By 1984 three high schools in Ottawa and five in Carleton offered programs in which students could take up to half of their course load in French. In Ottawa a "Bilingual Certificate" was granted to those who completed at least 13 of their high school credits in French.

The first groups entering the bilingual high school program included mainly students from the core French program (20 minutes per day) in Grades 1 to 8, along with a few students from French-language schools. Over the years, the core program in both boards increased to 40 minutes per day and the students also had the opportunity to enroll in the late-entry immersion program in Grades 6 to 8 in Ottawa or in Grades 7 and 8 in Carleton. Later the graduates of early-entry immersion programs began to reach the high school level, starting in 1979-80. By the 1983-84 school year those at the Grade 12 and 13 level in the bilingual program included students from both early- and late-entry programs, including some from the separate schools, as well as a few with other backgrounds.

The surveys. Since 1981, information about Ottawa and Carleton students in immersion programs has been collected by means of surveys, both of students in high school and of those who have graduated a year or more earlier. The first survey of Grade 12 students asked them to evaluate the program they had followed and to assess the level of French proficiency they had reached. It was also designed to obtain information about their future educational and career plans and to obtain a record of a permanent address at which these students could be reached later. A revised version of this questionnaire was used again with Grade 12 students in the following year and updated information sought from the first group. Details of the results of these surveys are given in Working Papers 143 and 146 (Bonyun, 1981, 1982).

In the spring of 1982 a follow-up study was undertaken of students who had been in the Ottawa Grade 12 groups of 1978-79 and 1979-80. Most of these students had completed Grade 13 one or two years prior to the survey. (See Working Paper 147, Bonyun, 1982.)

The 1984 Project

The investigations carried out in 1984, as part of a contract with the Ministry of Education of Ontario, included a continuation of the surveys both of students still in school and of those who had left. This part of the final report provides a brief overview of the response to questionnaires given to students at the Grade 12 and 13 level in a bilingual program in Ottawa and Carleton. It also contains a summary of the answers given in 1984 by three Ottawa graduate groups. A more detailed description of the survey of bilingual-program graduates is found in Working Paper 161, and of Grade 12 and 13 students in Working Paper 160. Part I of the Eleventh Annual Report submitted to the Ministry outlines the test results obtained at the Grade 12 level in 1984 and summarizes some of the earlier findings for this group, while Part II presents the data obtained from the tracing procedures for this cohort and a later one.

Respondent groups. All Grade 12 students in an Ottawa bilingual program or in a Carleton program for immersion students at this level constituted the first target group, involving nearly 200 students in Ottawa and about 125 in Carleton. The Grade 13 group included about 150 Ottawa students and over 100 in Carleton who had been in such a Grade 12 program in the previous year, whether or not they were presently enrolled in any French courses offered by the bilingual departments.

It should be noted that these groups included the first two sizeable cohorts of primary-entry immersion students to reach this level. The Grade 12 group in particular (the K-71 cohort) has been followed since starting Kindergarten and a considerable amount of information regarding their progress through school and achievement in various areas has been presented in previous reports.

The Ottawa graduate groups surveyed in 1984 consisted mainly of students who had completed Grade 13 in 1980, 1981, and 1983. As mentioned earlier, each of these groups had answered a questionnaire in the spring of 1982. The class list for French Language 12A from

the appropriate years provided the initial definition of these groups. The 1980 group included 128 students from one high school and the 1981 group 136 students from two schools; the latter group included the first few students to have experienced the full Ottawa late-entry program starting in Grade 6. The 1983 cohort consisted of 153 former students from three Ottawa high schools.

Procedures. The Grade 12 questionnaire was completed at the same time as French proficiency testing was carried out with this group in the spring of 1984. Since no other testing was being done at the Grade 13 level, the Heads of the Bilingual Departments of the various schools involved attempted to distribute questionnaires to the designated students; in some cases students were contacted at other schools in the area. A follow-up by mail was also carried out for those students who had not returned questionnaires through the schools.

Questionnaires for graduates were developed and mailed to the target groups in late August, using addresses obtained through earlier surveys. In October, a telephone follow-up was carried out in which attempts were made to contact all those who had not returned questionnaires. Updated addresses were obtained and a second copy of the questionnaire was mailed to most of those who had not yet replied.

Instruments. The initial group of items on the questionnaires for Grade 12 and 13 students sought information about the type of program followed in elementary and secondary school, to assist in the definition of the analysis groups both for test scores and for questionnaire responses. Another group of questions pertained to the students' plans for education or employment, including the expected role of the French language in these plans.

Students in both Grade 12 and 13 groups were asked to rate their own level of French proficiency and to indicate how well prepared they felt to use their French in a job or education. Students also had an opportunity to describe particularly good aspects of the program they had followed and improvements they felt were needed.

The members of the 1983 graduate group were asked about their high school courses and the effects of the bilingual program on their experiences in school and since leaving. There were also questions about the importance of various factors in their choice of a post-secondary institution and about the subjects they considered suitable to be taken in French. Other

questions for all of the graduate groups pertained to jobs held and programs of studies followed in the previous year and plans for future career and education. Respondents were also asked about their present level of French proficiency, recent use of the language, and French courses taken or planned, as well as about the expected importance of the French language in several aspects of their lives. Another item asked for their opinions about the role of universities and colleges in helping students to improve their French. Copies of the four different instruments used in 1984 are found in Appendix A.

Response rates. The 145 questionnaires completed by Grade 12 students in an Ottawa bilingual program represent approximately 77 per cent of the total enrolment at that level, while responses were received from 92 students or 69 per cent of the Carleton group. At the Grade 13 level, a total of 117 completed questionnaires were received from Ottawa students and 72 from Carleton, representing 82 and 65 per cent of the target groups in the two boards.

A total of 34 questionnaires from the three graduate groups (1980, 1981, and 1983) were returned by the post office as undeliverable. No current address could be found for these former students, so that the number thought to have received the questionnaires consisted of 147 students in the 1983 group and 240 in the groups graduating in 1980 and 1981. In each case the respondents consisted of about 70 per cent of those assumed to have received questionnaires.

School Background

As may be seen in Table 1, almost half of the Grade 12 respondents from the Ottawa Board indicated that they had been in an early-entry immersion program (EFI) between Grades 5 and 8, while about a quarter had followed the Ottawa late-entry immersion program (LFI) consisting of 100 per cent French instruction in Grade 6 and 50 per cent in Grades 7 and 8. At the Grade 13 level in Ottawa, the proportions of early- and late-entry students were different from those found in the Grade 12 group, since more of the latter group had had the opportunity to enter immersion at an early age. In the Carleton Board, about 40 per cent of respondents at both levels had followed that board's late-entry program of 80 per cent French instruction in each of Grades 7 and 8, while a smaller subgroup had been in an early-entry immersion program at least since Grade 5. Other subgroups had come from immersion or bilingual programs in the separate schools and a few from other elementary school programs.

TABLE 1

RESPONDENT GROUPS FOR STUDENT SURVEY: OTTAWA AND CARLETON
GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS, SPRING 1984

Program in elementary school	Per cent of group			
	Grade 12		Grade 13	
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton
Early-entry immersion	48	18	19	32
Late-entry immersion	24	41	33	36
Separate Board program	20	20	23	10
Other	8	21	25	22
Total number in group	145	92	117	72

Responses to other questions indicated that the proportion of the various groups who had spent any time in a francophone school was generally small (around 10 per cent). Very few in any of the groups had experienced one or more years of schooling in which they had no French instruction.

In another question for both Grade 12 and 13 students, respondents were asked to indicate what extracurricular opportunities they had had to learn French. Table 2 shows the per cent of each group who had had various kinds of opportunities to increase their French proficiency. Overall about a quarter of the respondents mentioned participating in a bilingual exchange, which was the experience described most often.

TABLE 2

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN FRENCH: OTTAWA AND CARLETON
GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS, SPRING 1984

Opportunity to learn French	Per cent of group			
	Grade 12		Grade 13	
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton
Bilingual exchange	32	16	24	29
Job	10	11	22	28
Travel	14	11	11	14
Home or parents	10	11	9	4
Friends or relatives	6	8	11	7
Summer program	8	5	5	7
Total number in group	145	92	117	72

High School Courses in French

There appeared, from the respondents' lists of high school courses taken in French, to be considerable variation from school to school in the number and content of courses offered. Table 3 shows the information about number of French courses taken in Grades 9 to 12 by the

Grade 12 and 13 groups. At both grade levels, students in the Carleton Board tended to take fewer courses in French than those in Ottawa. There was generally little difference between responses of the early- and late-entry students in a given board.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF FRENCH COURSES TAKN IN GRADES 9 TO 12: OTTAWA AND CARLETON GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS, SPRING 1984

Number of French courses in grades 9 to 12	Per cent of respondents			
	Grade 12		Grade 13	
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton
10 or fewer	7	57	9	54
11	1	23	4	25
12	12	17	14	20
13	60	2	60	1
14	14	1	9	0
15 or more	6	0	4	0
Number of respondents	145	91	113	72

Table 4 shows the number of Grade 13 French courses taken by the Ottawa and Carleton Grade 13 groups and by three Ottawa graduate groups. This table also shows the intentions regarding French of those Grade 12 students who planned to return for Grade 13 the following year. Significant differences existed between the distributions of responses for the Ottawa and Carleton Grade 12 groups and between those of the Grade 12 and 13 groups in Ottawa.

TABLE 4

GRADE 13 FRENCH COURSES TAKEN OR PLANNED: OTTAWA AND CARLETON GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS AND THREE OTTAWA GRADUATE GROUPS

No. of gr. 13 French courses taken or planned	Per cent of respondents						
	Grade 12		Grade 13		Ottawa graduates		
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton	1983	1981	1980
None	24	46	43	35	43	33	16
One	52	53	40	60	41	38	39
Two or more	24	1	17	5	16	29	45
No. of respondents	136	79	113	72	95	85	62

The Ottawa Grade 13 groups of 1980, 1981, 1983, and 1984 can be seen in Table 4 to differ in the number of French courses taken in their Grade 13 year. Moreover, when the total number of French courses in Grades 9 to 13 was computed for these four Ottawa cohorts, it was found that the proportion taking 15 or more French courses throughout high school decreased from nearly half for the 1980 group to about a sixth for the 1984 group, probably reflecting changing opportunities to take French prior to high school.

French Proficiency

Table 5 shows the responses of the Grade 12 and 13 groups from the two boards to the item asking them to assess their level of French proficiency in listening, reading, writing, and speaking. For almost all the groups, there were significant differences between ratings for listening and reading on the one hand, and writing and speaking on the other. However, distributions for early- and late-entry subgroups did not differ except at Grade 13 for writing and speaking in Ottawa and for listening in Carleton. Responses of the Grade 12 and 13 groups are similar to those of the three graduate groups on surveys conducted one or two years after leaving high school, in spite of differences in the backgrounds of the groups. Responses to another open-ended question indicated that about 80 per cent of students in Grades 12 and 13 felt they were at least adequately prepared to use French in a job or further education.

TABLE 5

SELF ASSESSMENT OF FRENCH PROFICIENCY: OTTAWA AND CARLETON GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS, SPRING 1984

Skill area and rating	Per cent of respondents			
	Grade 12		Grade 13	
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton
Listening				
With difficulty	0	0	1	1
Adequately	25	26	15	17
With confidence	75	74	84	82
Reading				
With difficulty	1	1	0	0
Adequately	25	23	21	21
With confidence	74	76	79	79
Writing				
With difficulty	5	2	5	3
Adequately	53	59	53	50
With confidence	42	39	42	47
Speaking				
With difficulty	6	5	9	1
Adequately	55	63	53	53
With confidence	39	32	38	46
Number of respondents	145	91	117	72

From 14 to 27 per cent of respondents in Grades 12 and 13 indicated that their present level of French proficiency exceeded what they had expected to achieve on entering the program. On the other hand, from 12 to 25 per cent of these students felt they were not as good as they had expected to be. About 12 per cent of respondents pointed out that they had had no particular expectations because of entering the program at an early age.

Opinions about the Program

Table 6 indicates the responses most frequently given by Grade 12 and 13 students in answer to a question about particularly good aspects of the program they had followed. The students in Ottawa most often mentioned the literature program and exchanges or field trips and those in Carleton also cited the literature program as well as some facet of oral French. In the 1982 survey of Ottawa bilingual-program graduates, it was found that over a third had mentioned the French literature program, while the language program, the teachers, and field trips were each mentioned by about 15 per cent of these groups.

TABLE 6

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE IMMERSION OR BILINGUAL PROGRAM: OTTAWA AND CARLETON GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS, SPRING 1984

Response	Per cent of group mentioning			
	Grade 12		Grade 13	
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton
French literature, reading	20	20	27	32
Bilingual exchanges, field trips	19	8	21	19
Particular subject in French*	18	4	15	7
Teachers	11	4	15	17
Oral work, talking French in class, discussions	3	13	14	22
Language, written work, grammar	10	7	15	8
Being able to take subjs. in Fr.	6	9	13	11
Full immersion in early grades	2	10	7	7
No response	18	33	18	17
Total number in group	145	92	117	72

* Students mentioned one or more of mathematics, history, geography and drama.

A further open-ended question asked students to describe improvements they felt were needed in the bilingual or immersion programs. Nearly 25 per cent of respondents omitted the question, said they did not know, or indicated that the program was fine as it was. The five most frequently mentioned areas shown in Table 7 were also among those suggested most often by earlier cohorts of graduates.

TABLE 7

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO BILINGUAL OR IMMERSION PROGRAMS: OTTAWA AND CARLETON GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS, SPRING 1984

Response	Per cent of group mentioning			
	Grade 12		Grade 13	
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton
More oral work, practical French	29	33	26	24
Better teachers	19	4	30	17
Wider course selection	15	12	16	24
Improvements in language program	10	2	11	1
More outings, plays, films, etc.	8	7	5	10
Changes in literature program	3	8	6	8
More emphasis on writing, grammar	1	5	7	8
No response	32	25	17	11
Total number in group	145	92	117	72

For both boards and grade levels, there was a significant difference between responses of early- and late-entry subgroups to a question about the optimal level for starting an immersion or bilingual program. Over 80 per cent of the early-entry students favoured starting immersion in Kindergarten or Grade 1, while in the late-entry groups less than 50 per cent felt children should start immersion as early as this. In earlier cohorts of graduates, which had included no early-entry immersion students, about half favoured starting immersion by Grade 1.

Over 80 per cent of the Grade 12 respondents in Ottawa and Carleton intended to take Grade 13 the following year and almost all the remainder planned to follow other types of post-secondary educational programs. Only about two per cent of these groups intended to have full-time jobs in the coming year, although about three-quarters of them expected to work part-time. Over 90 per cent of the Grade 12 groups indicated their intention to pursue some sort of further education after the 1984-85 academic year.

The proportion of the two Grade 13 groups indicating that they intended to be full- or part-time students in the following year was also about 90 per cent. Just over 35 per cent of the respondents planned to enter an arts-type program at a university, while about a quarter intended to work for a science degree and smaller groups were entering engineering or business. The high proportion of the Grade 12 and 13 groups who expect to attend universities or colleges is similar to that found with other cohorts of bilingual-program graduates.

Students in the groups in Grades 12 and 13 were asked in an open-ended question about the role they expected the French language to play in their future jobs or education. Responses generally fell into a few categories, as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

FUTURE ROLE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE: OTTAWA AND CARLETON
GRADE 12 AND 13 BILINGUAL-PROGRAM GROUPS, SPRING 1984

Role of French	Per cent of group mentioning			
	Grade 12		Grade 13	
	Ottawa	Carleton	Ottawa	Carleton
Improved job opportunities	52	43	37	44
Expect or hope to use in job	17	22	39	29
Communication, useful in general	25	25	26	21
Expect to take courses	8	12	15	28
Important role (unspecified)	5	7	2	4
Travel, living in French area	6	2	6	0
Little or no role	5	5	8	4
No response	9	8	4	1
Total number in group	145	92	117	72

School Background

High school courses. All but three of the 102 respondents in the 1983 graduate group indicated that they had obtained at least the 27 credits needed for a Grade 12 diploma, and almost 85 per cent of them had completed six or more credits at the Grade 13 level, as required for the Ontario Secondary School Honours Graduation Diploma. Table 9 shows responses of this group to a question about French credits. About 80 per cent of the respondents had obtained the 13 French credits required for their "Bilingual Certificate" by the end of Grade 12 and over half of the respondents had also taken some French in Grade 13.

TABLE 9

NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL FRENCH CREDITS:
1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Grades	Number of French credits	Per cent of group
Grades 9 to 12	12 or fewer	18
	13	52
	14	15
	15 or more	6
No response		9
Grade 13	none	40
	one	38
	two or more	15
No response		7
Total number in group		102

Effects of the program. Tables 10 and 11 indicate the respondents' views of the positive and negative effects of the bilingual program on their experiences in school and since leaving. The responses of the 1983 graduate group regarding the effects of the bilingual program were generally similar to those of the 1980 and 1981 groups to the same question in 1982.

TABLE 10

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM:
1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Positive effect mentioned	Per cent of group
Is an asset in job market, useful for career goals	42
Provided opportunity to acquire second language	25
Is useful in communication, travel	18
Provided close-knit group, sense of belonging	11
Was preparation for university work	8
Heightened appreciation of another culture	8
Increased confidence in using French	7
Made high school program more interesting, challenging	6
Broadened interests, knowledge, perspective	6
Increased appreciation of English, other languages	3
Developed self-esteem, satisfaction	3
Set high standards	3
Developed quality of determination, good study habits	2
No positive effects	3
No response	4
Total number in group	102

As shown in Table 10, about a quarter of the students said the program had provided an opportunity to learn more French, which they evidently felt was of benefit to them. Over 40 per cent specifically mentioned the benefits of being bilingual when applying for a job.

Smaller groups mentioned the value of being a member of a close-knit group of participants in the program or of having a more interesting and challenging course of studies, as well as opportunities to develop good attitudes and habits.

Nearly a third of the respondents did not answer the part of the question about negative effects and another dozen replied "none". Table 11 shows that over a quarter of the group mentioned the restrictions on the choice of courses necessitated by taking 13 credits in French. Lower marks, isolation from the rest of the school, decreased English skills, and increased work load were each mentioned by only a handful of respondents.

TABLE 11

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM:
1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Negative effect mentioned	Per cent of group
Decreased choice of courses or school	28
Provided poorer teaching	7
Lowered marks	6
Group was isolated from rest of school	4
English suffered	5
Increased work load	3
Does not make you totally bilingual	3
Does not provide enough opportunity to use French	3
Level of French was too low	2
Learned less in French courses	1
Other courses suffered	1
Hostility from other students	1
Students felt like guinea pigs	1
Bilingual certificate does not mean much	1
No negative effects	13
No response	32
Total number in group	102

Activities Since Leaving School

Education. As may be seen in Table 12, about 90 per cent of the members of the 1984 graduate group, and almost as high a proportion of the two other groups, were pursuing further education during the 1983-84 academic year. These figures are comparable to responses of the two graduate groups in 1982, although the format of the question on the two surveys was somewhat different. A total of 32 respondents from the 1980 group and 10 from the 1981 group had obtained a first degree at the time the 1984 survey was conducted.

TABLE 12

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN 1983-84 ACADEMIC YEAR:
1980, 1981, AND 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Program	Per cent of group		
	1980 group	1981 group	1983 group
University programs:*			
Arts	36 (16%)#	42 (8%)#	32
Science	18 (7%)	24 (1%)	23
Commerce	10 (7%)	8	10
Applied science	5 (4%)	5	11
Nursing, medicine, law	4	2	0
Community college programs	6 (5%)	0	8
Other part-time courses	7	3 (1%)	5
No courses	14	16	10
No response	0	0	1
Total number in group	81 (40%)	87 (11%)	102

* Arts - includes Fine Arts, Journalism, Social or Environmental Studies, Social Work and Religion
Science - includes Mathematics and Computer Science
Commerce - includes Business Administration, Public Administration
Applied Sciences - includes Engineering and Architecture

\# Figures in brackets indicate the per cent of respondents in that group who had completed a university degree at the time the survey was conducted.

About 90 per cent of the 1983 graduate group planned to take courses in the 1984-85 academic year. Of the earlier groups, over 80 per cent planned to be part- or full-time students in 1984-85, including nearly 60 per cent of the subgroup of respondents who had already obtained one degree.

Respondents in the 1983 graduate group who had attended a post-secondary institution in 1983-84 or who planned to do so in 1984-85 were asked to rate 16 different factors as to their importance in the choice of a post-secondary institution. As may be seen in Table 13, the institution's academic reputation and location were very important to the largest proportion of these students in the selection of a university, while the French-language facilities were of some importance to only about 40 per cent of respondents.

TABLE 13

IMPORTANCE OF SEVERAL FACTORS IN THE CHOICE OF A POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION: 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Factor	Per cent of respondents		
	Not import.	Somewhat import.	Very import.
The good reputation of one particular program	6	33	61
Institution's reputation for academic excellence	7	45	48
Financial considerations	29	34	37
Opportunity to move away from my home town	51	20	29
Institution's location close to home	31	41	28
Availability of job-oriented programs	45	29	26
Advice or encouragement of family and friends	39	44	17
Size of community where institution is located	55	32	13
Institution's French-language facilities	60	31	9
Opportunity to be with friends	56	35	9
Advice or encouragement of counsellors	63	30	7
Institution's size	58	36	6
Advice or encouragement of high school teachers	60	35	5
Language of local community	65	31	4
Institution's athletic programs and facilities	62	34	4
Family tradition or example	84	14	2

* Based on 95 respondents who had attended or planned to attend a post-secondary institution

Employment. Table 14 shows the number of respondents from all three groups who indicated that they had held jobs since leaving high school. It may be seen that almost all these respondents had been employed in some way during this period; many had held summer or part-time jobs only, but nearly a third of the earlier groups indicated that they had been employed on a full-time basis for at least part of the time since leaving school.

TABLE 14

TYPES OF JOB HELD SINCE LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL:
1980, 1981, AND 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Type of job held	Per cent of group		
	1980 group	1981 group	1983 group
No job	1	1	3
Summer jobs only	33	39	53
Part-time jobs	13	12	13
Full-time jobs	27	15	6
Other or combination of the above	25	26	20
Work term jobs ("co-op" program)	1	7	4
No response	0	0	1
Total number in group	81	87	102

As described in answers to the second part of this question, the type of work done by most of the members of the three respondent groups was in fields often associated with student summer or part-time employment: in food services, sales, office or clerical work, recreational programs, or manual labour. The complete list of jobs mentioned is very extensive and not easily summarized.

Exposure to French

French courses. Table 15 shows the number of respondents who indicated that they had taken courses in French conversation, courses in French language and literature, and other subjects with French as the language of instruction. For the 1980 and 1981 groups this question was directed towards the previous two years, while for the 1983 group it related to the time since leaving high school. It may be seen that from 25 to 30 per cent of the groups had taken at least one French course during the indicated time, with language and literature being the type of course most frequently taken.

TABLE 15

RECENT FRENCH COURSES TAKEN:
1980, 1981, AND 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Type of course taken	Per cent of respondents		
	1980 group	1981 group	1983 group
French conversation	5	10	14
French language and literature	18	17	18
Other subject taught in French	11	7	9
At least one French course	25	29	30
Number of respondents	79	87	102

In 1982 it was found that there was a significant difference between the distribution of responses of the two graduate groups surveyed at that time to a question about the number of French courses taken in the first year of university. Table 16 shows responses of the 1980 and 1981 groups to both surveys and of the 1983 group to the present questionnaire; respondents included in this table are those who indicated that they were students at the time of the survey. It will be seen that 1984 responses of all the graduate groups appear similar to those of the 1981 group the year after they had completed Grade 13.

TABLE 16

NUMBER OF FRENCH COURSES TAKEN IN PREVIOUS YEAR:
1980, 1981, AND 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Year of h.s. graduation	Year of survey	Per cent of group taking			N
		No French course	One French course	Two or more courses	
1980 group	1984	72	12	16	68
1981 group	1984	69	12	19	73
1983 group	1984	68	22	10	91
1980 group	1982	51	39	10	62
1981 group	1982	70	24	6	81

An open-ended part of the question about French courses asked how well prepared respondents felt they had been for the courses they had taken. No more than a quarter of those answering this question mentioned any significant problems and those that were mentioned most often involved speaking.

Only about a third of the 1980 and 1981 groups, and a smaller proportion of the 1983 cohort, who had taken French courses expressed reservations about the suitability of courses taken for their present needs and level of proficiency. It should be remembered that their needs for courses probably varied considerably, as did the level of the courses taken, which appeared to range from a review of basic French grammar to degree courses at a French language university.

About 30 per cent of the respondent groups indicated that they would have taken other French courses had they had the opportunity to do so. Among the courses mentioned in this context were French literature and conversation courses and a wide variety of other subjects taught in French, each being suggested by a small number of respondents.

Use of French. Table 17 shows the number of students choosing each response to a question about the extent to which French had been used, except in courses, either during the previous two years (for the 1980 and 1981 group) or since leaving high school (for the 1983 group). It

may be seen that, in each graduate group, about a third indicated that they had made little use of the language, while approximately 40 per cent had used it both at work and in other situations. It should be noted that this item does not give information to distinguish between those who used French occasionally and those who used it frequently in a given situation.

TABLE 17

RECENT USE OF FRENCH:
1980, 1981, AND 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Response	Per cent of respondents		
	1980 group	1981 group	1983 group
Scarcely at all	30	35	31
Only with friends and family	7	11	7
Only at work	14	18	23
Both at work and outside of work	49	36	39
Number of respondents	81	87	102

French Proficiency

Self-assessment. Table 18 shows how the 1983 graduate group responded to an item asking them to assess their ability to participate in out-of-school situations requiring various French skills. It may be seen that roughly three-quarters of the group felt confident of their ability to understand or read French, but a significantly smaller proportion ($p \approx 0.001$) felt confident about speaking or writing the language. Comments added by a number of students explained how their proficiency had been affected by recent exposure to French or described their problems with the language, most often in the area of speaking.

TABLE 18

SELF-ASSESSENT OF FRENCH PROFICIENCY,
1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Skill	Proficiency level	Per cent of group
Listening	With difficulty	2
	Adequately	20
	With confidence	78
Reading	With difficulty	2
	Adequately	24
	With confidence	74
Writing	With difficulty	12
	Adequately	55
	With confidence	33
Speaking	With difficulty	11
	Adequately	50
	With confidence	39
Total number in group		102

In order to examine the respondents' assessment of their French proficiency in relation to other answers regarding exposure to French, cross-tabulations were carried out among several of the variables. For reading, writing, and speaking, but not for listening, there was a significant difference in estimated proficiency between the group which took French in Grade 13 and those who did not ($p @ 0.05$). When respondents were divided according to whether or not they had taken a French course at the post-secondary level, a difference was found in writing ($p @ 0.01$) and speaking ($p @ 0.05$), but not in listening or reading. Ratings on all four French skills were significantly related ($p @ 0.001$) to responses to the question about the extent to which the language had been used since leaving high school.

The 1980 and 1981 groups were not asked the same question about French proficiency as the 1983 group, but were asked to describe how prepared they felt to use French in a work, educational, or social situation. For just over 30 per cent of respondents in these groups, answers indicated a high degree of confidence in their ability to use French, while a similar proportion used words such as "moderately", "fairly", or "adequately" prepared to describe how they felt. The remainder expressed some reservations, their answers ranging from "not at all prepared" to "well enough to get by" or "a little rusty".

Responses to this question for the 1980 and 1981 groups were coded on a five-point scale and examined in relation to answers about recent exposure to French. Those respondents who had taken some French courses in the previous two years felt more prepared to use French than those who had not ($p \leq 0.05$). Moreover, a significant relationship ($p \leq 0.001$) was found between respondents' preparedness to use French and the extent to which French had been used in the previous two years.

Changes in proficiency. Almost a quarter of the 1983 graduate group believed that their French proficiency has improved since leaving school, while about 40 per cent felt their French was not as good as it had been on completing high school. Respondents' explanations of the reasons for such changes clearly indicate that exposure to the language was the major factor. Answers to this question were significantly related to those about post-secondary French courses taken ($p \leq 0.01$) and to those involving recent use of French ($p \leq 0.001$).

For a subgroup of about 80 respondents from the 1983 group it was possible to compare the assessment of their level of French with their answers to the same question when they were in Grade 12. For all four skill areas, the proportion who said in 1984 that they could use French "with confidence" was higher than it had been in 1982; in the case of reading the difference was significant ($p \leq 0.001$). For only about half the respondents in this subgroup did differences between the two assessments of proficiency appear to be in agreement with answers to the earlier question about changes in French proficiency.

Respondents in the 1980 and 1981 graduate groups were also asked to indicate whether their level of proficiency in French had changed in the previous two years, and, if so, how and why. Almost 60 per cent of respondents felt that their proficiency in one or more areas had decreased, and only about 20 per cent indicated that they had improved. A small group

felt their skills had improved in one area and declined in another. There was a significant difference among the three graduate groups ($p \leq 0.05$), with a higher proportion of those who had been out of school longer feeling that their level of proficiency had decreased.

Virtually all respondents in the 1980 and 1981 graduate groups who mentioned a change in proficiency attributed it to the extent to which they used the language. When answers to the question about changes in French proficiency were tabulated in relation to those about courses taken or other use of French, it was found that such changes are strongly related to the use of French ($p \leq 0.001$) and to courses taken in the language ($p \leq 0.05$).

Other Questions

Courses suitable to be taught in French. An open-ended question asked respondents in the 1983 group which high school and college courses they felt were most suitable to be taken in French and to give reasons for their answers. The subjects most frequently mentioned (by about 40 per cent of the group) were the social sciences and French literature, while French language and mathematics were each suggested by almost a quarter of respondents. Ten per cent or less mentioned science, dramatic arts, or French conversation, and individuals or small groups mentioned courses in a variety of other areas. Reasons given for suggesting these courses included the provision of opportunities to speak French or to obtain practice in reading and writing, to learn about French culture, and to broaden knowledge, especially about literary works.

While respondents were generally in agreement about the suitability of the social sciences or arts subjects, opinions were much more varied about mathematics, the sciences, or technical subjects. Seventeen respondents said mathematics was not a good subject to take in French, while 19 said this about science or technical subjects. Some of these students felt that these subjects were too difficult or technical to take in French, that English was the language of the scientific community, that it would be difficult to take further mathematics or science courses in English, or that not much French was learned by taking mathematics in French. The similarity of terms and ease of translating back and forth between the two languages was mentioned by those who favoured taking mathematics in French.

Recommendations regarding learning French. Some of the responses of the 1980 and 1981 graduate groups to the question "What recommendations would you have for a student in elementary school wishing to learn French under the present circumstances?" indicate that it was interpreted as meaning "Would you recommend learning French?" Those who made this interpretation were unanimous in responding in the affirmative, but there was less agreement within the group who interpreted the question as asking for recommendations about the best way to learn French, as may be seen in Table 19.

TABLE 19

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING WAYS OF LEARNING FRENCH MADE BY 1980 AND 1981 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Area	Recommendations made	Number of respondents
Type of program	Take bilingual program	26
	Take immersion program	12
	Take immersion and/or bilingual program	15
	Go to a French school	8
	Speak French in class	5
	Take other subjects in French	4
	Take program which emphasizes conversation	4
Time to learn French	Start early	14
	Start between grade 4 and grade 7	7
	Maintain it, keep it up through high school and beyond	15
Activities outside school	General: Practise as much as possible, seek opportunities to use it	27
	Travel, live in a totally French milieu	16
	Go on exchange programs	15
	Watch French TV, theatre, films	10
	Read French books and magazines	6
	Make French-speaking friends	5
	Listen to French radio	3
No response		11
Total number in group		168

Role of universities and colleges. Respondents in all the graduate groups were asked about the extent to which they believed universities and colleges should play a role in helping students to improve their French and, in the second part of the question, to describe what that role should be. Table 20 shows the responses to the first part of this item.

TABLE 20

ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN HELPING STUDENTS IMPROVE FRENCH PROFICIENCY: 1980, 1981, and 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Response	Per cent of group		
	1980 group	1981 group	1983 group
A very important role	51	40	36
A modest role	38	50	47
No role at all	6	1	6
Don't know	4	6	10
No response	1	3	1
Total number in group	81	87	102

Suggestions for ways in which post-secondary institutions could help their students to meet their needs for French included ideas for both academic programs and extracurricular activities. The suggestion made most frequently was that suitable French courses should be widely available, including a variety of types and levels. About 12 per cent of respondents suggested offering other subjects in French or a bilingual program. Opinion was divided regarding compulsory French courses; about ten per cent of respondents felt a language course or a certain level of proficiency should be mandatory, while a slightly larger group took the view that the decision should be up to the student at this level. A group of over 30 respondents suggested that the university should encourage contact with French by promoting social activities, clubs, and other extracurricular activities. Summer immersion programs, exchanges, and trips were mentioned by a somewhat smaller group.

Plans for the Future

Graduates in all groups were asked about their long-range career and educational objectives, and as well about their plans to take further French courses and their expectations about the role the French language would play for them in the future. Although their answers do not reveal how definite these plans were, about half of the total group expressed a desire to take further French courses, as may be seen in Table 21. This proportion is about the same as that found in 1982 when the 1980 and 1981 graduate groups were asked a similar question.

TABLE 21

PLANS TO TAKE FURTHER FRENCH COURSES:
1980, 1981, AND 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Type of course	Per cent planning to take courses		
	1980 group	1981 group	1983 group
French conversation	17	17	18
French language and literature	7	9	13
Other subject taught in French	10	5	6
Two of the above types	6	5	16
All three types of course	9	5	6
No plans to take more French	47	56	41
No response	4	3	0
Total number in group	81	87	102

Table 22 shows the responses of the three graduate groups to a question about the expected importance of French in several aspects of their future jobs or education. The only significant difference among the responses of the groups occurred in the case of the question about the possibility of taking courses in which French is the language of instruction ($p \leq 0.05$). For all of the groups, job opportunities and travel were the areas where the highest proportion of respondents felt French would be very important to them. The question asked of

the Grade 12 and 13 students surveyed was different in format, but it will be recalled (Table 8) that improved job opportunities was the area in which the highest proportion of these groups expected the French language to play a role in their future.

TABLE 22

FUTURE IMPORTANCE OF FRENCH:
1980, 1981, AND 1983 GRADUATES OF OTTAWA BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Aspect of job or education	Group	Per cent of respondents			N
		Not import.	Somewhat import.	Very import.	
Helping to open up more job opportunities or to get a better job	1980	6	33	61	81
	1981	4	29	67	85
	1983	3	23	74	102
Making travel to places where French is spoken more convenient	1980	9	23	68	81
	1981	3	34	63	86
	1983	11	36	54	102
Making it possible to take courses in which French is the language of isntruction	1980	16	30	54	81
	1981	18	27	55	86
	1983	29	42	29	102
Usefulness in chosen line of work	1980	14	50	36	80
	1981	17	49	34	86
	1983	15	45	40	101
Opening up a wider range of activities in my private life	1980	22	48	30	80
	1981	30	43	27	86
	1983	26	54	20	101

In describing their long-range career and educational objectives, most of the 1983 respondent group mentioned completing their current post-secondary program and finding work in their chosen field. About a quarter of this group and over a third of the earlier groups mentioned the possibility of education beyond a bachelor's level. About ten per cent of each group mentioned using French or the benefits of being bilingual.

The investigations carried out by the Research Centre as part of the 1984 contract with the Ministry of Education of Ontario included surveys of bilingual-program graduates, both at the end of high school and one or more years after completing school. The Grade 12 and 13 groups in the Ottawa and the Carleton Board included the first sizeable groups of early-entry immersion students to reach the end of high school; the Grade 12 groups in particular have been followed since Kindergarten and tested extensively at several stages of their school career.

In 1984 a questionnaire was sent to Ottawa bilingual-program graduates who had been in Grade 13 in 1980 or in 1981. These groups had also been surveyed one or two years after graduation. A survey of the 1983 Grade 13 group was also carried out. Responses were received from about 70 per cent of these graduate groups.

Grade 12 and 13 Responses

The early- and late-entry subgroups made up from 20 to 50 per cent of each of the groups in Grades 12 and 13, which also included some students from separate school programs and from French-language schools. In Ottawa, 80 per cent of respondents at the two levels had taken from 12 to 14 high school courses in French while only 20 per cent of Carleton students had taken more than 11 French courses. Over half of the respondents were taking or planned to take some French in Grade 13.

Students in the Grade 12 and 13 groups tended to rate themselves higher on comprehension of spoken or written French than on writing or speaking the language. About three-quarters of the students felt confident about their ability to understand the language but only about 40 per cent indicated they could write or speak with confidence. There appeared to be little difference between the ways the early- and late-entry groups felt about their French proficiency.

The Grade 12 and 13 respondents mentioned the French literature courses more often than anything else in describing particularly good aspects of the programs they had followed. A smaller group mentioned the bilingual exchanges or field trips. More emphasis on the spoken language, better teachers, and wider course choice were the improvements most often suggested.

Most of the Grade 12 students expected to return to high school the following year and about 90 per cent of respondents at both levels planned to seek some sort of post-secondary education. Most respondents indicated that they expected the French language to play some role in their lives, mentioning improved job opportunities for bilingual applicants more often than any other aspect.

The responses of the 1984 Grade 12 and 13 groups were, in general, similar to those of earlier groups in their assessment of the program and their own French proficiency, as well as in their plans for further education. The groups who had followed early- and late-entry immersion programs at the elementary level differed little, except in opinions about the optimal grade for starting immersion.

1980, 1981, and 1983 Graduate Groups

Like other cohorts of bilingual-program graduates, most of the 1983 Ottawa group had completed Grade 13 and obtained the 13 French credits in high school necessary for the "Bilingual Certificate" offered by the board. They generally appeared to feel positively about the French skills they had acquired in the bilingual program. The only negative effect of the program mentioned by more than 10 per cent of respondents was the restrictions it placed on course choice.

About 90 per cent of respondents in the 1983 graduate group, and almost as high a proportion of the 1980 and 1981 cohorts, were taking courses during the 1983-84 academic year, about 80 per cent of them being full-time students at universities and community colleges. Nearly 40 per cent of respondents in the earliest group had obtained a university degree at the time questionnaires were completed. From 80 to 90 per cent of the groups planned to continue their education in 1984-85.

The 1983 graduate group indicated that, in choosing a post-secondary institution, reputation, location, and financial considerations were most important to them, while only 40 per cent of respondents indicated that the institution's French-language facilities had been somewhat or very important to them.

From 25 to 30 per cent of the three graduate groups had taken at least one French course in the previous year or two. The majority were satisfied with their own degree of preparation for the courses they had taken and with the suitability of these courses for their present needs. When asked about the extent to which they had recently used French in situations other than courses, about a third of respondents answered "scarcely at all", while over half indicated that they had used it to some degree in a work situation.

The 1983 graduate group rated their level of French proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in much the same way as had the Grade 12 and 13 groups and as the other graduate groups had on the earlier survey. Just under a quarter of all the graduates felt their French proficiency had improved recently, while 40 per cent felt they were not as proficient as they had been previously. Respondents' explanations for these changes indicated that perceived gains or losses in language skills were dependent on opportunities to use the language.

About 40 per cent of respondents believed that universities and colleges should play a major role in helping students improve their French and a similar proportion felt that the role should be a modest one. Suggestions as to the nature of the universities' role included ones pertaining to both academic courses in French and the provision of extracurricular activities facilitating language acquisition.

The subjects mentioned most frequently by the 1983 graduate group as being suitable to be taken in French included the social sciences and French literature. Opinion among respondents was divided about the suitability of mathematics, science, and technical subjects.

In answer to a write-in question about recommendations for learning French, about a third of respondents in the 1980 and 1981 graduate groups suggested a bilingual or immersion program. A similar proportion mentioned the importance of exposure to the language outside of the classroom.

About half of the bilingual-program graduates expected to take further courses in French. In general, a higher proportion of graduates expected French to be very important to them in the areas of job opportunities and travel than did so in their private lives.

Concluding Statement

The follow-up of graduates shows that the typical student who followed a "bilingual" high school program in Ottawa had taken a university program in arts or science and had some experience in a job where French was used in the work place. Such students felt that French skills would be an asset in the job market. They thought that their listening comprehension and reading skills were such that they would be confident in a French-language environment, but that their writing and speaking skills would best be described as adequate. Most students felt their French proficiency had decreased since leaving school, but their responses were related to whether they had used French outside of school or taken courses in the language.

The questionnaire to the students who were in Grade 12 and 13 in 1984 gave information similar to that obtained from earlier groups. It will also be particularly useful in locating students as follow-up studies of former immersion students continue with successive cohorts in Ottawa and with graduates of similar programs in other parts of Ontario and in the rest of Canada.

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RELATED WORKING PAPERS

Working Paper 143. Attitudes towards their Program and Plans for the Future of Grade 12 Bilingual-Program Students. November 1981.

Working Paper 146. Grade 12 Student Survey: Year Two, Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1982. July 1983.

Working Paper 147. The Ottawa High School Bilingual Program: Views of Two Groups of Graduates. July 1983.

Working Paper 160. Grades 12 and 13 Student Survey, Ottawa and Carleton, Spring 1984 (in progress).

Working Paper 161. 1984 Follow-up of Bilingual-Program Graduates (in progress).